# *New York*
# Theatre Critics' Reviews
## *1950*

Volume XI, Number 5 • Rachel W. Coffin, *Editor* • Week of February 13, 1950

### 1950 PRODUCTIONS
Premieres in Other Years
*Original Reviews Appeared In These Volumes*

1949 Vol.


| *Stage Play* | *Page* |
|---|---|
| *Caesar and Cleopatra | 193 |
| *Clutterbuck | 205 |
| *Death of a Salesman | 358 |
| *Detective Story | 330 |
| Diamond Lil | 369 |
| Father (The) | 223 |
| *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes | 198 |
| *I Know My Love | 233 |
| *Lost in the Stars | 241 |
| *Miss Liberty | 279 |
| *Rat Race (The) | 190 |
| *South Pacific | 312 |
| *Texas, Li'l Darlin' | 214 |
| That Lady | 217 |
| *Touch and Go | 250 |
| *Velvet Glove (The) | 185 |


1948 Vol.


| | |
|---|---|
| As the Girls Go | 159 |
| *Kiss Me, Kate | 91 |
| Lend an Ear | 122 |
| Madwoman of Chaillot (The) | 104 |
| *Mister Roberts | 338 |
| *Where's Charley? | 197 |


**Asterisks indicate shows scheduled to play week of February 13, 1950*

### 1950 PRODUCTIONS
Premieres During 1950
*Reviews Appear in This Volume*


| *Stage Play* | *Page* |
|---|---|
| *Alive and Kicking | 390 |
| All You Need Is One Good Break | 352 |
| *Arms and the Girl | 356 |
| *As You Like It | 367 |
| *Cocktail Party (The) | 376 |
| *Dance Me a Song | 380 |
| Design for a Stained Glass Window | 373 |
| *Enchanted (The) | 387 |
| Happy As Larry | 394 |
| *Happy Time (The) | 370 |
| *Innocents (The) | 359 |
| *Man (The) | 384 |
| *Member of the Wedding (The) | 397 |
| *Mr. Barry's Etchings | 362 |


*Theatre Openings*

"All You Need Is One Good Break"

**Asterisks indicate shows scheduled to play week of February 13, 1950*

*Theatre Critics' Reviews brings you each week the complete reviews as they originally appeared in these New York newspapers.*

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN
NEW YORK POST HOME NEWS
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
NEW YORK MIRROR
NEW YORK WORLD TELEGRAM & THE SUN
NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
NEW YORK TIMES

All Reviews copyrighted by the newspapers and reproduced by permission.

*Yearly Subscription $25.00*

*Published by* CRITICS' THEATRE REVIEWS, Inc., 235 East 22nd Street, New York 10, N. Y.

# "All You Need Is One Good Break"

Journal-American

February 10, 1950

## Lengthy Talkathon About a Screwball

By ROBERT GARLAND

When the curtain rises on "All You Need Is One Good Break," Martin Rothman, a Sid Caesar character but more so, has talked himself into jail. For the remainder of an endless evening, he tries to talk himself out. But justice prevails and a cop, a clerk, a lawyer and commonsense detain him.

**This talky talkathon, of which the Sid-Caesarian Mr. Rothman is practically the sole contender, is by Arnold Manoff. On the West Coast, there was one act with moving-pictures. Crossing the continent, Monte Proser, Joseph Kipness and Jack Small added a second act and substituted moving-scenery.**

Now, on Manhattan, "All You Need Is One Good Break" is, I dare say, sincere. But sincerety is not always a virtue. It depends upon what you are sincere about. The importation from the West Coast is sincere about a case-history called Martin Rothman, a screwball who lives on hot air and hunches.

And, last night, on the patience of a friendly congregation!

• • •

Do you remember when, in "Make Mine Manhattan," Sid Caesar carried on like crazy about a poor dear vending machine which could not return their pennies to the kiddies when its chewing gum slot was empty? It was supposed to be heartbreaking to hear Mr. Caesar tell how the vending machine turned to villainy.

**Well, that is the way, in "All You Need Is One Good Break," Martin Rothman carries on about the one good break which, as badly as he needs it, will not arrive. He tries everything — numbers, horses, craps. Everything but the shipping-clerking which is his job.**

While trying, he talks and talks. And talks and talks again. Up in the Bronx, he talks and talks until his family throws him out for talking. Down on the street, he talks and talks until his friends throw him in for talking. Finally, as I have told you, he talks himself into jail . . .

There, he keeps right on talking and talking!

• • •

As the talkiest talker since the Dumb Wife got married, John Berry talks real good and loud throughout the endless evening which is "All You Need Is One Good Break." I can not think of a truer criticism than to re-assure you that it is like Sid Caesar talking about the poor dear vending machine forever.

**Mr. Berry has learned to talk good and loud with gestures through association with Orson Welles, Paul Muni and J. Edward Bromberg, with whom he is still associated. Mr. Bromberg, co-director at the Mansfield with Mr. Berry, is heard but fleetingly as a druggist. He would talk more had he the opportunity.**

While Samuel Leve's production is moving like a picture up, down, and all around the stage, Anna Appel, Reuben Wendorff and Ellie Pine get a word in edgewise as Martin Rothman's mother, father and sister. There is many another frustrated talker and frantic moving-scenery dodger, too. But—

They, like you, fail to get the needed one good break!

**"ALL YOU NEED IS ONE GOOD BREAK"**

Play by Arnold Manoff; staged by John Berry and J. Edward Bromberg; settings by Samuel Leve; lighting by Peggy Clark; costumes by Paul duPont; presented by Monte Proser and Joseph Kipness in association with Jack Small at the Mansfield Theatre, February 9, 1950. The cast:

Cop.....Charles Cooper
Clerk.....Harry Davis
Martin Rothman....John Berry
Meyer Rothman.....
Reuben Wendorff
Fanny Rothman.....Ellie Pine
Mrs. Rothman.....Anna Appel
Charlie.....Shimen Ruskin
Gordon...J. Edward Bromberg
Hockfleish.....Phil Carter
Sleepy Duke.....Lee Krieger
Willie the Hack..John Sylvester
Benny Numbers.....Edwin Max
Sam.....Phillip Pine
Helen.....Marianne Loris
Diane.....Lee Grant
Headwaiter...Anthony Mannino
Harry.....Salem Ludwig
Ruth.....Louise Craig
Esther.....Ronnie Paris
Second Discusser....Gene Saks
The Waiter.....Andy Ball
Stella.....Lucille Patton
Nurse.....Gertrude Corey

Synopsis: The action of the play takes place on a street in New York City.

---

New York Post

HOME NEWS

February 10, 1950

## The Man Who Talked On and On

By Richard Watts Jr.

"All You Need Is One Good Break," which opened at the Mansfield last night, has the longest title of the season and the actor playing its leading role has the longest part. These, I am afraid, are the only distinguishing features of the new play by Arnold Manoff, which chiefly serves to demonstrate how unwise it is for an ambitious dramatist to try following in the footsteps of Clifford Odets, Arthur Miller and Arthur Kober if he happens to be lacking in skill and eloquence.

I won't say that Mr. Manoff is without talent, because he has written one fresh and entertaining comedy scene. It is an episode wherein the central character is ignominiously routed in his dashing attempt to break down the resistance of a lonely but knowing girl, and it is worthy of a far better play. Delightfully acted by Lee Grant, who created the part of the shoplifter in "Detective Story," it is one of the wise and engaging interludes of the season.

**Words, Words**

Indeed, nothing else in the new work belongs in the same theatre with it, although there are a couple of passable scenes in the first act. For the rest of the time, the going is exceptionally dreary, with John Berry, who has the interminable central role, fatiguingly bogged down in a dismal swamp of words in what seems far longer than the leading parts in "Dream Girl" and the full-length "Hamlet" put together. It is a trying experience for all concerned.

Essentially the play is a sort of flow-of-consciousness monologue, with some of the episodes acted out, telling of the crack-up of a worthless and incurable young romantic, who believes he is waiting for a break in life. A shiftless and garrulous fellow, whose dreams are derived from sentimental movies, he is waiting for his fortune to come to him from the numbers game or some other dubious enterprise, while he wastes no time on work.

**Stream of Monologue**

Since you are unlikely to find out about it unless you read it here, I may tell you briefly that the young man is caught up in seriousness when his mother is taken to the hospital, and apparently he goes mad when he tries to help her. What is chiefly disastrous is that the endless stream of monologue, which strives for the kind of simple prose-poetry Odets used to achieve, is dull pointless and meaningless.

Miss Grant is the only player who has any personal success, although J. Edward Bromberg and Shimen Ruskin manage small parts pleasantly. Mr. Berry works with brave industriousness in his unending role but only in the scene with Miss Grant is he properly effective. The new play is ambitious in purpose and production, but it is a hopeless enterprise, despite that one interlude.

New York World-Telegram
and
The ~~Evening~~ Sun

February 10, 1950

# 'All You Need Is One Good Break' Opens at Mansfield

By WILLIAM HAWKINS.

Dreamer Monte Proser thought he had a sure-thing "daily double," as the curtain rose on "All You Need Is One Good Break" last evening in the Mansfield. With co-producer Joseph Kipness and in association with Jack Small, Monsieur Proser hoped to parlay his share of the profits from Arnold Manoff's hazy two-act play on a new nightclub in the East Fifties.

What he actually had sunk his capital into was an "if money" bet that fizzled in the first half.

**Might Have Been Art.**

If this erratic drama had been produced by Kermit Bloomgarden 15 years ago. If it had been written by Clifford Odets, directed by Elia Kazan and starred John Garfield at that time, perhaps it might have been called "art" and "revolutionary." But it wasn't—and it isn't.

**On Wrong Side of Town.**

When the final curtain came down Milton Berle opined: "The title is wrong. It should be 'All You Need Is One Good Act.' And it's playing on the wrong side of town. On Second Ave. it could be a hit."

From our point of view on the aisle, "All You Need Is One Good Break" is a crazy quilt. It has bright flashes of greatness, but too many of its other patches fail to blend.

It was a tattered section of Manhattan tapestry that could be warmly identified only by those who were intimately familiar with specific details of life and lingo on Morris Ave. in the Bronx, or Amboy St. in Bklyn.

**Moving to Some.**

To those it was rich in nostalgia and deeply moving. To others it was remote, foreign and falsetto.

"All You Need, etc.," tells the tragic story of a hopeless youth in a poor family in which the father was a failure, the son a neurotic.

Neither school nor work suited his fancy. He was self-ordained for manor-life, but totally incapable of any sincere effort to lift himself from the gutter in which he wallowed. Ordinary jobs of which he was fired from countless, paid too little to keep him abreast of his flashy visions.

**Put Hope in Numbers.**

So he played a dollar on the numbers racket every day, positive that the law of averages had to give him that one break which would open the flood gates of easy money. Then he would be able to support his window-gazing father, invalid mother and younger sister.

That break never comes, of course. Debts accumulate. Shylocks dun him. While he passionately wagers on number 623, the family starves. His mother has a stroke that necessitates an expensive operation. And in one final, futile gamble—the high point of the play—he runs true to form. He cracks up mentally and ends in jail.

**Should Be Tired.**

John Berry, who emotes as the son, must have been a tired man this morning. Words and brainstorms spilled out of him in breathless, arm-waving profusion all evening. His dreams were backgrounded with neon signs flashing, turntable stages moving, bells ringing and music playing like a pinball machine gone berserk.

His candy-store borrowing from Shimen Ruskin, his skirmishing with druggist J. Edward Bromberg, his phony love scene with Lee Grant and his wild ranting in the closing scenes provided sparks of magnificence. But in the decisive count the total efforts of the talented cast of 30-odd suffered a technical knock-out.

---

DAILY NEWS

February 10, 1950

# Words and Scenery Mix It Up in 'All You Need Is One Good Break'

By JOHN CHAPMAN

Now that the curtain has fallen on "All You Need Is One Good Break," which was presented last evening at the Mansfield, maybe I can get a word in edgewise. Couldn't make myself heard before because John Berry, in the leading role, was talking longer and harder than a Southern senator filibustering against the Civil Rights bill.

If Mr. Berry's author, Arnold Manoff, will permit Mr. Berry to shaddup for a couple of minutes, I'd like to tell you that Mr. Manoff's play has been given a remarkable theatrical production—and in my opinoin a futile one. It has more scenery than a Burton Holmes lecture and more lights than a pinball gallery. It has thirty-eight actors and actresses, some of whom are quite good; but in spite of the efforts of thirty-seven of them, Mr. Berry does not remain silent for sixty consecutive seconds in the entire duration of the drama. And when I say duration—boy—I mean duration.

Mr. Manoff's soliloquy for Mr. Berry is the story of a Bronx Aubrey Piper told in his own north-county words. Our sorry hero is a young man who earns a salary much too small to support himself in his natural flashy style with enough left over for an indigent father, an invalid mother and a teen-age sister. He gets a hunch that the number 623, bet on the numbers game, will get everybody off the hook.

**Dreams and Talks.**

He dreams, and talks aloud in his trance. Last evening he even talked aloud in my sleep as he imagined the triumphs the money would bring him. He winds up in jail a nervous wreck, but I managed to get back to the office without any interns in white pants (white slavers, Josephine Hull used to call them in "Harvey") throwing a butterfly net over me.

Mr. Berry surely must be the world's most durable actor. It also happens that he is a pretty good one, and I admired several of the scenes into which his impetuous author had thrust him. Best of these, I thought, was the chapter in which Mr. Berry went on the make for a nice Bronx girl in her apartment—not because of any crass physical desire, but because her brother had money. The girl is played by Lee Grant, and once again Miss Grant—who used to be the shoplifter in "Detective Story"—demonstrates that she is a very capable young actress. A very capable actor, J. Edward Bromberg, plays a bit as a neighborhood druggist.

**Fantastic Sets.**

Samuel Leve and Peggy Clark, who designed and lighted the sets for the show, have turned up a quite fantastic physical production, and under the direction of Messrs. Berry and Bromberg the big cast miraculously keeps out of the way of the scenery. In a twinkling, or maybe two twinklings at most, the stage of the Mansfield will transform itself from an apartment to a street corner, or from the corner to a night club, jail cell, drug counter or stationery store.

I think Mr. Manoff was trying to write the story of a well-intentioned heel and win some sympathy for the jerk. George Kelly did it much better and infinitely simpler when he wrote "The Show Off." And I am long past the point of goggling when a stage production is made to look just like the movies. Revolving scenery tends to make me carsick.